

up. Well, take a look at what has happened. We imported 1,288,546 vehicles from Korea in 2014 and only exported 34,186. There are 40 times more imports coming into our country than exports going out. The Korean free trade agreement has been a failure for American workers too.

With these Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations continuing to advance, America should ask: Could it possibly be a good deal for American workers?

We already have colossal trade deficits with some of the countries with which the negotiations are occurring—with Malaysia, with Vietnam, and, obviously, with Japan. The prospective TPP partners use protectionism and currency manipulation to gain unfair advantage, and, in some cases, they fail to regulate appalling labor conditions. These nations will not deliver on the promises made in support of TPP.

History should teach us that we need a new trade model. America doesn't need more job-outsourcing trade deals. The executive branch and, specifically, the National Security Council better start paying attention to the harm it causes when it forgets its global strategies have created undue harm here in the homeland. The people in the United States are asking for a new trade model that creates jobs and economic growth in our country again—I might say robust economic growth—for which the American people have been waiting for almost three decades.

TIME TO ADDRESS THE CRITICAL FUNDING SHORTFALL FOR OUR TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, this week on Capitol Hill, there are hundreds and hundreds of people from around the country who are delivering a message: that America is falling apart and is falling behind, and it is time for us to address the critical funding shortfall for our transportation needs.

They could not have picked a better time to come to Capitol Hill. The 10-month extension of the surface transportation legislation is set to expire in 6 weeks. It is the latest in a series of 23 short-term extensions. No nation ever became great planning its infrastructure 9 months at a time.

The Republican budget—passed last month—again proposes to cut transportation spending, which is already inadequate, 30 percent over the next 10 years despite hearing from local governments, business, labor that the Federal Government should be larger in its contribution, not smaller.

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The unwillingness to face reality got us to where we are today, falling apart, falling behind. The country that used to have the finest infrastructure in the

world was recently rated 17th, and we are falling further behind.

The gas tax hasn't been increased since 1993, and it has lost nearly 40 percent of its purchasing power. We can't pay for transportation in 2015 with 1993 dollars, but it is interesting that action has taken place on a number of different levels. Over a dozen Senators have been talking about raising the gas tax. Some of my Republican colleagues in the House have agreed that raising the gas tax is the right thing to do.

When I introduced House Resolution 680 in February that would phase in a 3-year, 15-cent gas tax increase, I was joined by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the AFL-CIO, truckers, AAA, transit, local government, contractors, and bicyclists—it is the broadest coalition you will see on any major issue—all saying to Congress, Stand up and do the right thing. A gas tax increase is the only solution that is dedicated, sustainable for the long term, and big enough to do the job.

Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that, while Congress continues to dither, people at the State level are taking action in anticipation that the Federal partnership will be there. Two years ago, I was told it was impractical; it would never fly politically.

Well, what we have seen in the last 2 years, that 13 States—including 7 Republican States—have raised the gas tax. Of the State legislators that voted to increase the gas tax, 98 percent of them were reelected—I would note, a better percentage than the Senate Democrats running for reelection in the last election.

With the support of Congress, this broad coalition, we can actually step up, revitalize the economy. We can strengthen communities. We can put hundreds of thousands of Americans to work at family wage jobs in every State in the Union.

Mr. Speaker, in 1982, Ronald Reagan gave his Thanksgiving Day address, where he pointed out that the gas tax hadn't been raised in over 20 years. He pointed out needs for critical maintenance and construction. He pointed out that raising the gas tax would create hundreds of thousands of family wage jobs. Ronald Reagan called on Congress to come back and more than double the gas tax. Ronald Reagan and Speaker Tip O'Neill and Congress did just that, and America was the better for it.

There is no reason that this Congress cannot demonstrate the foresight and courage of President Reagan and the Congress over 30 years ago and show the fortitude that has been shown in States around the country who are betting that we are going to be there working with them.

I sincerely hope that my colleagues listen to the hundreds of men and women on Capitol Hill telling this story from the perspective of unions, local government, and business. The needs are there. Congress needs to act. The public deserves no less.

TAX FAIRNESS AND TAX EQUITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the recognition and the opportunity to revise and extend my remarks and to address the body of the House.

Mr. Speaker, as my colleagues all know, this is the week that the American people will strike that check to the Internal Revenue Service to pay their taxes. Now, what has ended up happening through the years, as this tax that came on our books about 100 years ago and was to be a 1 percent temporary tax, has grown and grown and grown, and it continues to eat a greater share of our incomes.

I hear from constituents every single day—every single day—about the unfairness and the overreach of the IRS. They are so fed up with this because what they observe is government continues to grow and the bureaucracy continues to grow, and what happens? It just takes away bits and pieces of our freedom every time that bureaucracy expands.

That is the reason that this week we in the House have set aside time to make certain that we are addressing those concerns that we hear from our constituents. This is a week where we are going to talk about tax fairness, tax equity, and also about overreach, which comes from a government that refuses to live within its means and continues to take more out of the pockets of hard-working taxpayers who are fighting and working so hard to live within their means. I think there basically is something immoral about taxpayers working so hard to live within their means and sending money to a government that refuses to live within its means.

Now, there are some things that we can do to address this issue and things that we ought to be doing, and we are. One is to look at a permanent repeal of the death tax. I am so pleased that Chairman RYAN and Chairman BRADY are bringing these bills forward.

The other that I want to talk specifically about for a few minutes is H.R. 622. This is a bill that I am the lead cosponsor on with Congressman KEVIN BRADY and one that is very important to my State of Tennessee, just as it is to the other States—Texas, Florida, Washington State, Nevada—that don't have a State income tax but that choose to fund their government off of other taxes, sales tax. What this legislation does is to make permanent the ability of citizens, taxpayers in those States to deduct their sales tax, their State and local sales tax from their Federal income tax filing.

Now, this is an issue Congressman BRADY and I have been working on since 2003, and that year we were successful in having the ability to deduct that sales tax restored to your State income tax, your Federal income tax